

**MINUTES OF THE  
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

December 12, 2007  
MAG Office, Saguaro Room  
Phoenix, Arizona

**MEMBERS ATTENDING**

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| * Councilmember Peggy Bilsten, Phoenix, Chair                    | Mayor James Cavanaugh, Goodyear                          |
| Mayor Keno Hawker, Mesa, Vice Chair                              | * Mayor Boyd Dunn, Chandler                              |
| Councilmember Ron Aames, Peoria                                  | Mayor Hugh Hallman, Tempe                                |
| Kent Andrews, Salt River Pima-Maricopa<br>Indian Community       | * Eneas Kane, DMB Associates                             |
| F. Rockne Arnett, Citizens Transportation<br>Oversight Committee | Mark Killian, The Killian Companies/<br>Sunny Mesa, Inc. |
| Vice Mayor Gail Barney, Queen Creek                              | # Joe Lane, State Transportation Board                   |
| Stephen Beard, SR Beard & Associates                             | # Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers, Avondale                     |
| Mayor Steven Berman, Gilbert                                     | # Mayor Mary Manross, Scottsdale                         |
| Dave Berry, Swift Transportation                                 | * David Scholl, Westcor                                  |
| * Jed S. Billings, FNF Construction                              | # Mayor Elaine Scruggs, Glendale                         |
| Mayor Bobby Bryant, Buckeye                                      | Supervisor Max W. Wilson, Maricopa County                |
- \* Not present  
# Participated by telephone conference call  
+ Participated by videoconference call

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) was called to order by Vice Chair Keno Hawker at 4:00 p.m.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Vice Chair Hawker noted that Mayor Manross, Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers and Mayor Scruggs and Mr. Lane were participating by telephone. He noted that Chair Bilsten was leaving office due to term limits and a Resolution of Appreciation had been prepared for her.

Vice Chair Hawker requested that members of the public turn in their public comment cards to staff. Transit tickets for those who used transit to attend the meeting and parking garage ticket validation were available from MAG staff.

3. Call to the Audience

Vice Chair Hawker stated that an opportunity is provided to the public to address the Transportation Policy Committee on items that are not on the agenda that are within the jurisdiction of MAG, or non action agenda items that are on the agenda for discussion or information only. Citizens will be requested not to exceed a three minute time period for their comments. An opportunity is provided to comment on agenda items posted for action at the time the item is heard. It was noted that no public comment cards were received.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

Vice Chair Hawker stated that public comment is provided for consent items. Each speaker is provided with a total of three minutes to comment on the consent agenda. It was noted that no public comment cards were received.

Vice Chair Hawker asked members if they had questions or would like to hear any of the consent agenda items individually. No requests were noted. Supervisor Wilson moved to recommend approval of the consent agenda items #4A, #4B, and #4C. Mayor Cavanaugh seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

4A. Approval of September 19, 2007 Meeting Minutes

The Transportation Policy Committee, by consent, approved the September 19, 2007 meeting minutes.

4B. Arterial Life Cycle Program Status Report

A status report on the Arterial Life Cycle Program (ALCP) was provided for the period between July and September 2007 and includes an update on ALCP Project work, the remaining FY 2008 ALCP schedule, and ALCP revenues and finances. This item was on the agenda for information and discussion.

4C. Update to the Arterial Life Cycle Program Policies and Procedures

The Transportation Policy Committee, by consent, recommended approval of the proposed changes to the previously approved December 13, 2006 ALCP Policies and Procedures. The Arterial Life Cycle Program (ALCP) Policies and Procedures, approved by the MAG Regional Council on December 13, 2006, required revisions. The proposed revisions included a section on Regional Area Road Fund (RARF) closeout policies and other minor technical refinements. The Transportation Review Committee and the Management Committee recommended approval of the revisions.

5. Proposition 400 Noise Mitigation Funds

Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, stated that on May 24, 2007, MAG issued a solicitation of projects to utilize the remaining \$20 million of noise mitigation funds that were part of Proposition 400. The purpose of the program is to address noise mitigation in residential areas where traffic noise substantially increased due to overall increases in traffic volume on the MAG Regional Freeway System. The original intent of the program was to mitigate noise in areas not eligible for noise mitigation through the normal Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) process, i.e., areas that are scheduled for

roadway improvements through 2025. ADOT has completed a review of the requests and has determined that the requests for sound walls total about \$17 million. Mr. Anderson noted that at each place was the request from the City of Glendale for reimbursement of \$9.3 million it spent on noise walls along Loop 101.

Mr. Anderson stated that there is a total of 11 sites that were evaluated by ADOT: five in Phoenix, two in Scottsdale, three in Peoria, one in an unincorporated part of the County near Sun City West. He advised that an extensive petition was received from residents of Scottsdale in the Cactus Road/Loop 101 site, which he could make available to members. Mr. Anderson explained that the City of Glendale funded noise walls along Loop 101 due to significant issues in this area. He said that ADOT did not fund them because the notice of public knowledge for Arrowhead Ranch was approved before the corridor was sited. Mr. Anderson said that ADOT policy calls for the pulling of building permits being the date of public knowledge.

Mr. Anderson stated that all 11 sites have significant noise issues, but only one has levels that on an average basis exceeds ADOT policy. He said there is concern that if mitigation is provided to sites that do not meet the ADOT criteria the program would be opened up to provide noise mitigation across the system. Mr. Anderson added that there is still some question about how ADOT conducts noise analysis. According to Federal Highway Administration, analysis should be done at the time when traffic is worst to provide a baseline noise level. Mr. Anderson advised that ADOT conducted some of the analyses during peak hours and others they did in non-peak hours.

Mr. Anderson stated that upon approval, the next step is for ADOT to conduct detailed noise modeling in order to define and determine the effectiveness of the proposed noise mitigation solutions. He said that the requested action is for the TPC to recommend that ADOT move forward with the detailed noise modeling, and at the same time MAG can work with ADOT to resolve issues about peak and non-peak monitoring. Mr. Anderson added that the modeling is a two-month exercise, after which the results would be brought back to the TPC.

Vice Chair Hawker asked for clarification why 26 locations were listed in the agenda material and analysis had been done on only 11 sites. Mr. Anderson replied that there are multiple locations listed for the same site where noise monitoring takes place.

Supervisor Wilson asked the dollar amount for the 11 sites. Mr. Anderson replied that ADOT has estimated construction costs for the 11 sites at \$17 million, with \$20 million available. Mr. Anderson added that the \$17 million total does not include the Glendale reimbursement request nor the design costs.

Mr. Berry expressed concern about projects not meeting ADOT criteria and that it seemed there could be a risk of setting a precedent. He asked if getting a legal opinion might be advisable. Mr. Anderson replied that he tended to agree about consulting legal advice before moving forward with construction projects. He added that the requested action was not to move any projects forward, but to move forward the noise modeling. Mr. Anderson said that when the Loop 303 connects to I-10 and I-17, the noise volumes will rise along Loop 303. He added that perhaps noise mitigation for these projects might be done from construction funds and not noise mitigation funds.

Vice Chair Hawker recognized public comment from Cherie Gould, speaking on behalf of the Astoria and Greenstone neighborhood in Scottsdale. Ms. Gould stated that the development along Pima Road and Loop 101 concerns residents. She said the neighborhood is in unanimous agreement that they love the proximity of the freeway for their use, but they have no peace of any kind due to freeway noise. Ms. Gould stated that the neighborhood supports the construction of sound walls along Loop 101 and feel they should be erected to restore peace in their neighborhood. Vice Chair Hawker thanked Ms. Gould for her comments.

Vice Chair Hawker recognized public comment from Steve Dreiseszun, President of the F. Q. Story Historic District. Mr. Dreiseszun commented that he has addressed the TPC previously on the impacts to his neighborhood resulting from I-10 which has run through his neighborhood for the past 17 years. He commented that the noise mitigation process has been a long time coming and is overdue. Mr. Dreiseszun stated that most of the money was spent on rubberized asphalt and the last of the money that was hoped would last for 20 years is being spent. Mr. Dreiseszun encouraged the TPC to follow this process to its natural conclusion to protect neighborhoods from noise. If noise continues, it is an unfair burden to neighborhoods. Mr. Dreiseszun also encouraged finding future funding because there are 15 years left in the program and no money left for future neighborhoods. He stated that it is the residents who are bearing the brunt, and he hoped neighborhoods are protected through the MAG process. Vice Chair Hawker thanked Mr. Dreiseszun for his comments.

Mayor Scruggs stated that Glendale's situation is the same as other jurisdictions - it made improvements before funds became available. She stated that the City of Glendale has never received assistance for sound walls it erected. Mayor Scruggs stated that \$9 million is a tremendous amount of money for a community to bear. She stated that with Proposition 400, some jurisdictions were paid retroactively for road improvements already completed.

Mr. Beard stated his agreement to have consistent monitoring data because of the important decisions that will be made as a result. He stated his agreement with Mr. Berry about projects that do not meet the criteria. Mr. Beard stated that there is a lot of growth yet to happen and it is important to fund projects that meet the criteria and continue to reserve funds for those projects. He commented that if all of the money is spent now on projects not meeting the criteria, the program might be out of money later for projects that do meet the criteria.

Mayor Scruggs stated that a 1985 aerial view that showed the future location of Loop 101 and existing housing not deemed to meet the requirements was the reason this project was denied funding from Proposition 300. She stated that at the same time, there was on file an approved master plan with 4,000 acres of homes. Mayor Scruggs stated that the city had to build sound walls because the noise was tremendous. She noted that they were told they could not have funding in the first round because no homes were there, and now they are being told they cannot have funding because the homes were already there.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated that he understood this item was not to fund any project, just to do the noise modeling. Mr. Anderson replied that was correct, the action being requested was to authorize ADOT to do the noise modeling work. Mayor Cavanaugh stated his agreement with Mr. Berry. He said that there is a correlation between development and who pays for walls. Mayor Cavanaugh stated that a legal interpretation of planning is essential.

Mayor Berman asked if the area would meet the criteria if Glendale had not built the sound walls. Mr. Anderson replied that according to the data that Glendale supplied to ADOT, the area would meet the criteria. Mayor Berman remarked that if the project met the criteria and was built to protect the neighborhood, he had no problem reimbursing Glendale.

Vice Chair Hawker stated that there are two issues that the TPC could address: 1) Legal issues. 2) Addressing retroactive reimbursements for communities who undertook noise mitigation at their own cost.

Mr. Berry moved to recommend that ADOT move forward with the detailed noise modeling. Vice Chair Hawker asked Mr. Berry if he wanted to include a legal opinion in the motion. Mr. Berry said he did not think the legal part needed to be included in the motion. Councilmember Aames seconded.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated that this was more than noise mitigation - it was about following a rule. Planning, pulling a permit, being in a site plan - that needs to be reported before spending any money.

The vote on the motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Hawker stated that a determination is needed on getting clarification of moving forward with reimbursement of projects paid by jurisdictions. He said he would like to get a vote either up or down. Vice Chair Hawker stated that there may be other instances where a jurisdiction built walls and was not reimbursed. He advised that criteria for that are needed. Mr. Anderson noted that the request for noise mitigation projects was silent on reimbursements, and there could be additional projects out there.

Vice Chair Hawker asked if there was a time constraint on the \$20 million. Mr. Anderson replied that originally, the noise mitigation funds were spread across 20 years; however, the accommodating the \$20 million over the next two years would not cause a problem with cash flow.

Vice Chair Hawker commented that there could be future changes to traffic patterns and spending all of the funds now could result in no noise mitigation money being available for those projects. Mr. Anderson stated that initially, the Proposition 400 funds were to take care of existing neighborhoods, and there was also discussion of recognizing that there might be future problems in neighborhoods facing freeways. Mr. Anderson noted that this year, the TPC discussed using funds to provide mitigation funding for neighborhoods without improvements planned for 10 to 20 years.

Vice Chair Hawker stated that a neighborhood might qualify 10 years in the future, but does not qualify today. He asked what funding would be available if the money is spent now. Mr. Anderson stated that noise modeling will take into account future traffic projections. He said that not all contingencies can be planned for, but the program can continue to entertain requests for noise mitigation for those projects and look for other sources of funding. Mr. Anderson referenced Mr. Dreiseszun's comments that rubberized asphalt took \$55 million of the \$75 million, and suggested finding ways to rebuild the fund. He noted that the cost of rubberized asphalt is significantly higher than expected, and it is up to the TPC to decide.

Councilmember Aames asked if ADOT had made any statement about reimbursement for existing walls. Mr. Anderson replied that ADOT has expressed no opinion. He added that ADOT sees this as a regional

issue and it is up to the region to set a policy. Mr. Anderson stated that ADOT is concerned about building noise mitigation projects that do not meet the criteria.

Mr. Beard suggested that staff contact member agencies and see if there are any other requests for reimbursement.

Vice Chair Hawker expressed concern that such a solicitation could be a wish list. He said he did not anticipate noise mitigation funding would be retroactive.

Mayor Cavanaugh asked if this was ADOT policy or law that states when a developer pays, when a city/town pays, or when ADOT pays. Mr. Anderson replied that it is not state law, but is part ADOT policy. He explained that the policy is that the date of public knowledge is the day the corridor alignment is set. If a building permit has been pulled prior to that, noise mitigation will be provided. Mr. Anderson advised that the construction permit must be before the date of public knowledge to be eligible for noise mitigation funding under ADOT policy. He said that he understood Arrowhead Ranch was approved as a master planned development, but a construction permit had not been pulled. Mr. Anderson commented that even though everyone knew about the development, ADOT reverted to the policy that the permits had not yet been issued, and the area did not qualify for noise mitigation.

Mayor Scruggs stated that at the date of public knowledge there were a few homes in a rural setting. She commented that there was no way 35,000 building permits could be pulled at one time, even though it was common knowledge the development was coming. Mayor Scruggs stated that ADOT declined to provide sound walls for a community it knew was going to be built, as the development was well recorded since 1983. She commented that even though the City showed ADOT the decibel sound readings, ADOT went back to the 1985 date of public knowledge, before the start of any construction. Mayor Scruggs stated that the same thing happened with landscaping, which they did not get. Mayor Scruggs asked how ADOT could know that is coming and what the people will be subjected to, and refuse to acknowledge it?

Mayor Cavanaugh stated that his point is that there is a policy that everyone follows. He expressed concern that a lot of people could be in line for reimbursement of sound walls.

Mayor Scruggs stated that she did not think there will be another situation like Glendale's.

Vice Chair Hawker stated that the \$20 million was not being spent now, and there were a lot of options for the TPC to consider. He noted that the requested action was to make a recommendation on moving forward with noise modeling to ensure that noise projects are done uniformly.

Mayor Hallman asked if there was a way to show the projects that had been funded by cities/towns. He said that it might be productive to show those examples and costs to better understand the equity.

Mayor Scruggs stated her support for Mayor Hallman's suggestion. She added that during the development of the Regional Transportation Plan, there were deliberate efforts to put in projects that would be reimbursed under Proposition 400.

6. Amendment to the FY 2008 MAG Unified Planning Work Program to Include a Transportation Survey

Dennis Smith, MAG Executive Director, stated that the Arizona COG and MPO Association has been meeting for the past two years on the Building a Quality Arizona (BQAZ) effort, which was begun to address statewide transportation needs. Mr. Smith stated that to better understand public attitudes regarding transportation needs, potential solutions and timing, a public opinion survey is being recommended. He noted that during Proposition 400, numerous polls were conducted to find out the citizens' positions and attitudes, election timing, and the effects of the economy. Mr. Smith advised that a scientific household telephone survey would explore citizen attitudes regarding transportation issues and potential solutions on a regional and statewide basis in addressing mobility needs. Mr. Smith stated that staff is requesting that the TPC recommend that a transportation survey be conducted to measure citizens' attitudes.

Vice Chair Hawker asked if the survey would be not only regionwide, but statewide. Mr. Smith replied that was correct, because it was being tied to a statewide election.

Councilmember Aames asked if the survey would be integrated into the timeline for the statewide proposition. Mr. Smith replied that it would be conducted in concert with the framework studies effort, which is a 12-month process.

Vice Chair Hawker asked if the TPC would be able to review the questions on the instrument prior to the survey being conducted. Mr. Smith replied that was correct. He explained that the consultant hired to conduct the survey would solicit input from the TPC to get ideas of what they would like on the poll.

Mayor Lopez Rogers asked if polling was being conducted in any other part of the state. Mr. Smith replied that he was aware that the Time Coalition has initiated one poll.

Vice Chair Hawker said that he preferred to spend money on building projects. He said that he felt the polling might be premature because the framework studies have not been completed.

Mr. Berry moved to recommend approval of an amendment to the FY 2008 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget to include \$55,000 for a transportation survey measuring regional and statewide attitudes, opinions and interests. He commented that he thought polling might help in the development of the plan. Mr. Arnett seconded the motion.

Councilmember Aames asked if staff felt a survey would be valuable in terms of gaining information and direction. Mr. Smith replied that staff felt a survey would be helpful. He stated that polling was extremely valuable in Proposition 400, when initially, there was interest for a highway plan only, but the polling showed the public supported a multimodal plan.

With no further discussion, the vote on the motion passed unanimously.

7. Update on the Litter Prevention and Education Program for the Regional Freeway System in the MAG Region

Kelly Taft, MAG Communications Manager, stated that the Regional Transportation Plan allocates \$279 million in funding for landscape maintenance and litter control efforts, including litter pickup, sweeping, and litter prevention/education efforts. She said that in August 2006, MAG contracted with Riester, an

advertising and public relations firm, to conduct a regional litter education and prevention campaign, Don't Trash Arizona!

Joe Yuhas, Executive Director of Public Affairs at Riester, and Jennifer Catapano, Integration Manager, provided an update on the anti-litter campaign's progress to date. Mr. Yuhas said that the goal of the program is to reduce litter on the regional freeway system in the MAG region, develop and implement a strategy to increase public awareness and change behavior, and establish a process to measure the success of the program. Ms. Catapano stated that through research, the target audience is shown to be 16 to 34 years of age. She said that statewide surveys were conducted to determine the public's perception of littering.

Ms. Catapano reviewed some of the campaign's public relations events, including the Top Ten Litter Hot Spots press conference with Governor Napolitano and Chair Peggy Bilsten, the Anti Trash Costume Bash, unsecured loads media event, EarthFest, media advertising through radio spots and the DonTrashAZ.com website. Mr. Yuhas commented that the dollars invested in the program need to be leveraged with free and earned media. He added that it is important that the partnership is coordinated with state effort and there is no duplication of efforts.

Ms. Catapano stated that an evaluation of the program's effectiveness will be measured by a reduction of complaints to the ADOT central office, and a phone follow-up survey conducted in the spring of 2008 with Arizona residents to measure awareness and behavior changes.

Councilmember Aames asked if the target group of 18 to 34 year-olds was going to be surveyed to measure the effectiveness of the program. Ms. Catapano replied that the survey will contact not only the target group, but all age groups across the state. Demographics information will be collected from respondents.

Mr. Andrews asked if hazardous waste was an issue for cleanup crews and how it was handled. Ms. Catapano replied that the campaign coordinates with Mark Schalliol who supervises freeway maintenance at ADOT. She said that road crews do encounter hazardous materials, such as drug paraphernalia, and there are procedures in place for proper disposal.

Ms. Taft stated that staff is looking for guidance from the TPC if they want to continue funding for the education program and keeping it as an item in the MAG FY 2009 Work Program. She advised that the two-year funding, which is currently at \$600,000, expires in August 2008.

Vice Chair Hawker asked the alternatives for using the \$600,000. Ms. Taft replied that the funding comes from Proposition 400, which includes funding for landscape maintenance, freeway sweeping, and litter control and education. She noted that the money could be used for any of those functions. Ms. Taft commented that litter prevention could reduce ADOT litter pickup costs, which currently run from \$3 to \$5 million per year. She added that is the goal of the litter education program.

Vice Chair Hawker stated that it might be good to quantify the results and show that the campaign actually reduced the amount of trash picked up. Ms. Taft noted that evaluation is one of the deliverables of the litter education campaign. She added that funding could be continued contingent upon the survey results in the spring.



Mayor Manross said that she felt an anti-litter campaign was an ongoing education effort. She recalled discussions during Proposition 400 of the importance of clean freeways to economic development efforts. Mayor Manross commented that this is not a great amount of money in the scheme of things. Mayor Manross stated that she understood the desire for concrete results, but she felt that more education and continual messages will make a difference and she supported continuing the anti-litter campaign. She said that at the minimum, there should be a placeholder for the program.

Vice Chair Hawker noted that this seemed to be the sentiment around the table.

Councilmember Aames stated that he would like to see survey results for the 18 to 34 target audience, not for 65 year-olds. He also stated that he would like to see an anti-litter education program in the schools, to teach children before they have fixed behavior.

Supervisor Wilson stated that covering loads on pickup trucks needs to be addressed somewhere in the campaign, even consulting with the Department of Public Safety (DPS) about additional fines for violators. Ms. Taft stated that according to DPS, the unsecured load fines have decreased by about 100 this year. She added that DPS feels that this decrease is the result of the anti-litter campaign. Ms. Taft also mentioned that a partnership has also been developed with U-Haul, which rents to people who are unfamiliar with properly tying down loads. She said that MAG and U-Haul are working on an event geared toward proper tie-down procedures.

Mayor Berman asked if there was a mechanism where the public can report litterers. Ms. Taft replied that people can call 1-877-3LITTER, and the violator will receive a letter in the mail informing them that they were reported for littering. Ms. Taft added that there is no citation because an officer needs to witness the violation and pick up the evidence.

#### 8. Building a Quality Arizona (BQAZ) Update

Mr. Smith stated that the Arizona COG/MPO Association and ADOT developed a work program project schedule that was included in the agenda packet. He commented that there has been much discussion on the election date. Mr. Smith stated that Task 4.0, preliminary critical needs definition, was discussed extensively among the partners. He stated that the partners are highly supportive of the studies, for example, the \$7 million in funding for the framework studies provided by the State Transportation Board.

Mr. Smith stated that at issue is the extent in which MAG can participate in the critical needs and still comply with federal requirements. He explained that MAG's planning process is certified by the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. To comply, conformity and public involvement need to be done through the MAG process. Mr. Smith stated that MAG cannot approve any plan, program, or project unless it has undergone conformity.

Mr. Anderson stated that staff has been working on a compromise on the critical needs definition without running afoul of the federal planning requirements. He said that the other issue is the rest of the state being focused on the framework studies process to reach a consensus plan.

Mr. Anderson listed three categories within the critical needs definition. The first category is Representative Projects, all of which are contained in the Regional Transportation Plan. Mr. Anderson

noted that in this region, there are project cost increases and desire to do projects accelerations. He said that from a statewide perspective, projects could include the widening of I-10 between the Phoenix metro area and Tucson, and the widening of I-17 north of Maricopa County to Cordes Junction area.

Mr. Anderson stated that the second category is Conceptual Projects, such as the I-10 Bypass. Mr. Anderson stated that the third category is the Unknown Project category. He said that it may include the results from the MAG Transit Framework Study, which are expected in late summer or early fall. Mr. Anderson added that the Governor would like to see a draft in early March.

Mr. Smith stated that the language developed for the suggested motion is supported by the Governor's office.

Mr. Beard moved to recommend having MAG work cooperatively with the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Arizona COG and MPO Association in developing the transportation framework studies that will set the future transportation direction for Arizona. Also to have MAG work cooperatively with ADOT to provide information that will describe the transportation challenges facing this region, including representative projects that are part of the approved Regional Transportation Plan. In addition, assist ADOT in describing future needs as part of the transportation framework studies. Mayor Hallman seconded.

Vice Chair Hawker called for discussion of the motion.

Councilmember Barney stated that Queen Creek is also a member of the Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG). He said that at the last meeting, they were asked by the Governor to approve a timeframe. Councilmember Barney stated that the CAAG Council had a lengthy discussion about what can happen when the results are unknown. He said that for this reason, he appreciated what MAG staff had done. Councilmember Barney stated that the CAAG Council had been told by the Governor's office that MAG and PAG had already come to conclusions. He expressed his appreciation that MAG staff had come up with a resolution he could wholeheartedly support.

With no further discussion, the vote on the motion passed unanimously.

#### 9. Update on the I-10 Bypass Study

Dale Buskirk, Director of Planning for the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), stated that ADOT has been conducting a study to determine a broad corridor for a possible bypass route for Interstate 10 around the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas.

Mr. Buskirk reviewed their study process that included public meetings and interviews with 42 stakeholders. He noted that the preliminary findings were presented to the State Transportation Board November 5th, followed by public meetings in November and December at seven locations. Mr. Buskirk noted that the public meetings were well attended and good input was received.

Dave French, the consultant working on the study, continued the presentation. He reviewed input received from the public and stakeholders, which indicated substantial city/county support for I-10 bypass; concern about promoting growth in San Pedro and Aravaipa valleys; concern about impacts to environmentally sensitive lands and wildlife; concern about impact on developed and entitled lands;

promote travel by rail; concern that growth may not occur; a preference to focus all improvements on existing transportation corridors.

Mr. French stated that there is a need for an alternative route for I-10 because Arizona's population is expected to continue to increase by 13 million to 16 million people by 2050. Mr. French advised that there will be extensive traffic congestion on I-10 in Phoenix and Tucson areas even with all planned improvements. He noted that due to economic globalization, truck traffic is expected to increase faster than automobile traffic between metro areas. Mr. French stated that Pinal County, and to a lesser extent Graham and Cochise Counties, need a highway system, as there is no alternative to I-10 in southern Arizona.

Mr. French stated that feasible alternatives need to avoid Indian reservations and protected lands; have minimal impact on urban development and land entitled for development; be able to be constructed through terrain; and accommodate wildlife crossings and other context sensitive features. Mr. French displayed a map of the corridors identified through the study process.

Mr. French reviewed the study findings: Improvements are needed to I-10 to the maximum extent reasonable. rail freight and passenger train service should be promoted; a corridor should be selected that is context sensitive to environmental, social, urban, and transportation issues; the corridor should be protected for future use; and long-term major funding sources should be explored. He said that the next steps include a presentation of the results of the study to the State Transportation Board on December 21st. Mr. French stated that the Board may decide whether to proceed to the next level.

Supervisor Wilson commented that every major accident shuts down I-10 and asked if this was one of the reasons to study alternative routes. Mr. Buskirk commented that accidents is one of the reasons an alternative route is needed. There are currently no alternatives and if there is an accident, there can be lengthy shutdowns.

Mayor Cavanaugh asked if the South Mountain Freeway was considered in the study. Mr. Buskirk replied that the South Mountain Freeway was not considered as part of the study. Mayor Cavanaugh stated that people have indicated they are ready to donate right-of-way and suggested capturing that information in the study. Mr. Buskirk stated that ADOT is aware of that issue through the Hassayampa Study. They want to take advantage of right-of-way offers.

Mayor Hawker asked if the ADOT Board could take a position on state trust land reform and corridor set asides. Mr. Buskirk replied that he did not think the Board had that authority.

Councilmember Aames asked about factors that would make routes more attractive for truck travel. Mr. Buskirk replied that in order for a route to be used by truckers, it would need to be either faster or shorter in miles.

Mr. Andrews asked if the Indian communities had been included as stakeholders, since the study did not include Indian Reservations. Mr. Buskirk replied that the Indian communities had not been interviewed; however, through the study process, comments have been received that they should coordinate with the tribes on future efforts.

#### 10. Commuter Rail Strategic Plan

Rick Pilgrim, URS Corporation, provided an update on the Commuter Rail Strategic Plan, which was initiated in February 2007. Mr. Pilgrim stated that the overall project approach was to convene stakeholders from around the region to define requirements for commuter rail in the MAG region and northern Pinal County, and to develop consensus for commuter rail in the Regional Transportation Plan. Mr. Pilgrim stated that the orienting theme is including a balance of physical requirements and jurisdictional requirements. He said that the draft plan would be back before the committee in February.

Mr. Pilgrim explained the different types of rail technology: light rail, an example of which is the system which will be operative in Phoenix by the end of next year; heavy rail, an example of which is the BART subway system in San Francisco; and commuter rail, an example of which is the Trinity Railway Express in Dallas that uses a locomotive train.

Mr. Pilgrim stated that commuter rail can benefit consumers by providing longer trips in congested corridors, offering relief in peak periods to parallel highways, providing service to urban centers, offering consistent travel times in the future, and providing links to developing areas. He noted that the purposes for trips by commuter rail include daily AM and PM peak period and occasional midday, evening, and weekend travel. Mr. Pilgrim stated that commuter rail would transfer to other transit connections, such as bus or light rail.

Mr. Pilgrim noted that 21 systems are currently operating in the nation, with 26 systems either proposed or in the planning stages. He advised that the Denver, Salt Lake City, Seattle, Dallas, and Houston regions, with which the MAG region competes for employers and skilled employees, are investing in rail.

Mr. Pilgrim stated that there is a need for transportation options due to population and traffic growth, transportation cost increases, air quality concerns, economic sustainability, and implementing existing railroad alignments for uses other than freight.

Mr. Pilgrim stated that in developing the strategic plan, an analysis evaluated the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats and identified the physical, operational, jurisdictional and financial opportunities and constraints in the region. Mr. Pilgrim displayed a map that showed the areas identified by stakeholders that might be appropriate for commuter rail.

Mr. Pilgrim stated that the proposed goals for the strategic plan include employing commuter rail to shape growth, improving transportation mobility opportunities, providing a seamless and cost effective transportation option, promoting sustainability, and increasing public/private cooperation toward implementing commuter rail.

Mr. Pilgrim then reviewed the implementation framework. He said that the concept system plan was developed from information in a previous MAG study and through input from stakeholders. The concept system plan includes utilization of the freight rail lines that are currently in place in the study area: the BNSF Grand Avenue, Union Pacific (UP) Mainline Chandler, the UP Mainline Southeast, the UP Mainline Yuma/West, and the UP Mainline Tempe. Mr. Pilgrim stated that the concept plan also considers potential alignments in developing areas.

Mr. Pilgrim said that implementing commuter rail will require decisions on governance and administration, cooperation with the railroads, and funding. He noted three potential commuter rail scenarios: the Get Started - a single corridor, low cost of entry option; the Starter System - a two or more corridors, moderate cost of entry option; the Regional System - a multiple corridors, high cost of entry option.

Mr. Pilgrim stated that the final stakeholders meeting took place the last week of October and they are in the process of outlining the implementation requirements. He advised that a draft final report would be brought before the Committee later in the year. Vice Chair Hawker thanked Mr. Pilgrim for his update.

Mayor Cavanaugh stated that offloading two to three lanes of freeway traffic from Buckeye to Phoenix could be possible by using rail. He asked if an analysis could be done that compare the capital costs of rail versus freeways to know the economic impact, as well as the environmental impact. Mr. Pilgrim replied that MAG has a wealth of information on what it costs per freeway lane. He noted that one freeway lane can carry approximately 2,000 cars per hour, and a train can carry 4,000 to 6,000 people per hour at a potentially lower cost. Mr. Pilgrim added that transportation needs not just one magic mode, but a range of options to be successful.

Mayor Hallman stated that part of what brought Tempe to the table on commuter rail is the situation at I-10 and the Broadway Curve. He said that a maximum 24-lane facility accommodates 400,000 vehicles per day and no more. Mayor Hallman commented that Tempe is concerned about how to service that capacity as the area grows. He stated that the corridor from Tempe to Maricopa was an historical rail line and they estimate it could accommodate 200,000 to 400,000 people per day. Mayor Hallman stated that the difficulty that will be faced is the people who think you can build freeways wider and wider. He added that their advantage is that at 24 lanes, the Broadway Curve will be maximized. Mayor Hallman stated that the environmental studies have been delayed for so long he would not want to delay them further by adding an alternatives analysis for rail. He said he wondered if perhaps an alternatives analysis could be added. Mayor Hallman stated that he only wanted to do something if it was cost effective, and commuter rail is the only option that will work in the Broadway Curve.

Councilmember Aames commented that the presentation was reflective of the stakeholder meetings and conclusions. He commented that commuter rail is an alternative solution for moving people besides continuing to widen freeways.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

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Chair

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Secretary